



Review of Save Children's support to promote the rights of children with disabilities

Zimbabwe programme



Save the Children
Norway

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OUR MISSION is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

AUTHORS

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Cover photograph: Photo of a school in Bikita District, Zimbabwe, taken by children during participatory review activities



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Abbreviations

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CRG	Child Rights Governance
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEO	District Education Office
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFSP	Emergency Food and Shelter Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
LCD	Leonard Cheshire Disability
LCDZT	Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe Trust
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNCH	Maternal Newborn and Child Health
MoHCC	Ministry of Health and Child Care
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PED	Provincial Education Director
PELS	Primary Education and Learner Services
PEP	Post-exposure Prophylaxis
QLE	Quality Learning Environment
RDC	Rural District Council
SC	Save the Children
SCI	Save the Children International
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SCZ	Save the Children Zimbabwe
SDC	School Development Committee
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SPS	Schools Psychological Services
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Executive summary

Introduction

As part of Save the Children (SC) Norway's global review of SC's work to promote the rights of children with disabilities, a short case study visit was made to SC Zimbabwe's (SCZ) education programme.

Save the Children has been operating in Zimbabwe for 32 years. It operates across various sectors, with a focus on building the capacity of civil society and government. Within its education sector work, it has a strategic partnership with Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe Trust (LCDZT), a national non-governmental organisation (NGO) (part of an international alliance) that is taking a lead on disability in inclusive education in Zimbabwe. As with other similar country contexts, many children with disabilities in Zimbabwe are not accessing school or are dropping out, due to inaccessible schools, poor quality teaching and learning, and generally negative attitudes towards their education among family, community and teachers. Overall SCZ has a strong focus on improving education quality through supporting teacher education, promoting reading skills development, etc.

Findings

The review highlighted that SCZ staff are aware that SC has a general commitment to upholding the rights of children with disabilities, and that other stakeholders are aware of national legislation that could promote these rights, if properly implemented.

Education and other sectors

SCZ is primarily working for the rights of children with disabilities through its collaborative work with LCDZT on inclusive education. This work has involved providing in-service training for teachers, including the development of a good quality training manual. The training was intended to be cascaded to other teachers, but this has not routinely happened. The programme has also conducted awareness raising among communities, which has reportedly had a significant impact on encouraging parents to enrol children with disabilities in school. The programme has also focused on supporting resource units established by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) in the operational districts, with a view to supporting children to transition into regular classes. The programme has provided equipment

for assessing children's hearing impairments, Braille machines for children with visual impairments, and educational materials to help children with learning difficulties access the curriculum. Overall, however, the review findings suggest that many children are remaining in the separate resource units, as facilities and teacher capacity in regular classes is still considered unable to support inclusion. SCZ's next planning period (2015-2018) has a stronger focus on promoting/supporting disabled learners' transition into regular classes.

Inclusive education is one of the activities conducted in SCZ's Basic Education programme of work and in its separate reading, numeracy, life skills and early childhood development (ECD) work. When trainings on these activities are conducted in the districts, approaches on how to teach learners with learning difficulties and mild and moderate disabilities are addressed.¹

Disability issues in other sectors could not be looked at during the visit. The review team was unable to interview personnel in other thematic areas, and the consultant had to shorten his visit by a few days due to a family bereavement. Nevertheless the 2015-2018 plans indicate that SCZ's maternal, new-born and child health (MNCH) work will include a focus on women with disabilities who are pregnant or mothers, seeking to reach/support them and reduce discrimination in the community. Previous HIV and AIDS work has reportedly supported girls with disabilities with sexual health and sexual abuse challenges. Within food security initiatives, children with disabilities are reportedly considered within the wider group of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).

Key points from the findings

Inclusive education

- There have been increases in enrolment and re-enrolment of children with disabilities as a result of the programme. Evidence on *how* this is achieved is less easy to obtain than examples of the positive end results.
- There has been less transition of children with disabilities from the separate resource units into regular classrooms than hoped, mainly due to perceived lack of capacity in the regular classes.
- Attitudes towards children with disabilities have changed markedly within schools, and within communities, although some negative attitudes persist.
- Academic success has been reported among children with disabilities, along with encouraging examples of children with and without disabilities interacting and supporting each other.
- Teachers reportedly have more commitment to teaching children with disabilities. They still feel they lack sufficient skills in practice.

¹ SCZ officer, pers. comm.

- Many children with disabilities are still reported to be out of school due to transport challenges, difficulties with boarding at schools, and the problems of transitioning from an inclusive primary school to a secondary school that has not been part of inclusive education initiatives.
- Identification of children with disabilities and assessment of their learning and other needs is occurring, but is reported to be limited by resource shortages which prevent some referral and follow-up from happening.
- Opinions about what schools still need in order to become more inclusive tended to focus on resource and infrastructure challenges, such as assistive devices and teaching and learning materials.

SCZ project planning, management and monitoring

- Disability issues are considered in the project cycle and monitoring and evaluation processes of the inclusive education work. SCZ's available written plans do not appear to feature disability in these processes for other projects.
- The way in which SCZ defines disability and types of disability appears inconsistent and at times confusing, especially regarding what the organisation calls 'mental challenges' or 'mentally retardation'.
- Review respondents gave a mixed picture of the level of stakeholder consultation/participation facilitated by SCZ. There are examples of work to support children's voice (including children with disabilities) through child-led groups and during consultations on school improvements.
- SCZ staff appear to have a general awareness of disability issues. There are few people with specific knowledge/experience around disability (especially outside the education sector).
- Most of SCZ's advocacy work around disability is in collaboration with LCDZT around inclusive education.

Summary of recommendations

While the review was not a formal evaluation, recommendations relating to findings have been made by the consultant which may be of use to the SCZ programme. These are summarised as follows:

Capacity building, learning and sharing

- SCZ could ensure that all staff from all sectors participate in some disability awareness training. Each sector could also have a disability focal point who does more in-depth learning and experience sharing, as well as motivating their sectoral colleagues to consider disability equality issues.
- SCZ could develop an increased focus on supporting staff and stakeholders to reflect on and document *how* inclusion is achieved within its projects.

- SCZ (with help from LCDZT) may need to develop/provide more practical guidance for all staff/partners on how to facilitate children with disabilities to participate or have a voice.

Planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- SCZ may benefit from writing a simple, clear strategy for including children with disabilities across all sectoral work, which can be a basis for a staff/partner capacity-building plan.
- SCZ ideally needs to increase the extent to which other sector projects explicitly document their plans for and achievements relating to children with disabilities.
- SCZ could increasingly ensure that surveys/data collection relating to projects in sectors beyond education ask disability-related questions.
- To assist with monitoring and evaluation (M&E), all projects could be encouraged to collect information about potential or actual beneficiaries, disaggregated by disability. To make this easier, SCZ may need to clarify its definitions, especially the term 'mentally challenged'.
- Advocacy messages around disability rights/equality ideally need to be embedded across all sectors and in non-disability specific projects.

Inclusive education

- SCZ could increasingly focus on adapting the resource units' remit to be more outreach oriented, providing more itinerant support to regular teachers.
- To keep improving teacher training for inclusion there could be more focus on advocating for fundamental reform to all pre-service training, and more support for teachers with ongoing informal learning and reflective learning.
- SCZ could increasingly focus on developing/promoting *practical* inclusive education training for teachers. Resource unit staff could become action research facilitators, helping teachers to learn about and take practical action to address inclusion challenges.
- To address resource challenges SCZ could develop more links with disability-specific organisations and service providers, who can advise, fund or provide materials. SCZ could also focus on supporting innovative, low/no-cost problem-solving approaches among stakeholders.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context

1.1.1. Save the Children in Zimbabwe

Save the Children (SC) has been operating in Zimbabwe since 1983. SC Zimbabwe's (SCZ) country programme focuses on five thematic areas: Basic Education, Child Protection, Child Rights Governance (CRG) Health and Nutrition (including HIV and AIDS) and Child Poverty. It has a mandate in both development and humanitarian contexts. Until 2014, HIV and AIDS was a separate thematic area.

“SC works through partners and these are Government Ministries, Civil Society, Local and Council Authorities, Independent Institutions and Child-Led groups” (SCZ officer).

SCZ's main focus is to work with, and build the capacity of, civil society and (local, district and national) government partners, so as to help them achieve their objectives, and SC's objectives. The table in Appendix 1, taken from SCZ's framework proposal for 2015-2018, highlights these working relationships.²

SCZ prioritises partnership approaches in its interventions, including information partnership approaches such as child-led groups. Within the education sector, SCZ aims to link its initiatives with ongoing national programmes, supported by entities such as UNICEF and Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and with Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), school development committees (SDCs), national institutions (e.g. universities) and teachers' colleges.

At ministerial, national, provincial, district and local level, SCZ works with government departments such as MoPSE and the Ministries of Local Government, Public Works, Health, Agriculture, Child Welfare and Probation Services, and Gender and Youth Empowerment. It also works at national and local level with staff from non-governmental organisations (NGO) and civil society organisations (CSO). Its main relationship in regard to disability and inclusion-oriented work is with Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe Trust (LCDZT) – see below.

SCZ is currently involved in the following programmes:

² SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, pp. 5-8.

Programme	Funded by
Emergency Food Security Programme in Binga and Kariba	USAID
Strengthening Community Participation in Health in 21 districts across Zimbabwe	EC and DFID
Child Protection (Victim Friendly Systems Courts and Pre-Trial Diversion Programme)	NORAD
Child Rights Governance	NORAD
Education	NORAD
Disaster Risk Reduction	NORAD
Strengthening the Realisation of Migrant Children's Rights in Southern Africa	EU and NORAD
Maternal and New Born Child Health	USAID in partnership with MCHIP ³

SCZ's partnership with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

SCZ has been working in partnership with MoPSE since 2002. At MoPSE's headquarters in Harare SCZ liaises with the Directorate of Primary Education and Learner Services (PELS) and the Disciplinary Services Departments, whose Principal Directors sit on the Permanent Secretary's (PS) Directorate. SCZ has worked on educational projects in four provinces – Mashonaland Central (Mbire and Rushinga Districts), Masvingo (Bikita and Masvingo Districts), Matabeleland South (Beitbridge and Matobo Districts) and Matabeleland North (Binga and Hwange Districts).⁴ SCZ works directly with the District Education Office (DEO) staff in the four provinces.

SCZ stated in the 2013 annual report that its staff members “come together [and work] with MoPSE at provincial level”. This allows MoPSE “to feed into SCZ's interventions”. For example, SCI created a package of educational support for its member states and country offices called the Quality Learning Environment (QLE). The QLE monitoring form is a global tool that was developed for education programmes to measure the quality of education in the learning sites. In turn this will inform the re-alignment of project activities to address any gaps identified for the learning sites with regard to providing quality education. The globally developed tool has been adopted by MoPSE and they have shared their comments on contextualising the tool to fit into the Zimbabwean context.

³ SCZ officer, pers comm. See also table in SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 4-7, and SCZ ZWE AWARDS document.

⁴ From 2015, it proposes to start work in Midlands Province (Gokwe North and Gokwe South Districts) and is finishing working in Masvingo Province.

SCZ's partnership with Leonard Cheshire

Since 2012, SCZ has been working through a strategic partnership with LCDZT, a national organisation that is part of the international LCD Global Alliance.⁵

LCD is a large international organisation. It is the UK's leading charity supporting people with disabilities nationally, while internationally it supports disability initiatives in 54 countries.⁶ LCD is a key member of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and LCD partners with various regional and international organisations, such as Save the Children, Sightsavers, ActionAid International, Plan International, Oxfam International and Light of the World.⁷

“[LCDZT] is a local NGO with expertise on support issues for CWDs [children with disabilities] such as assistive devices, infrastructure rehabilitation and skills and knowledge teachers and other professionals need to work with CWDs” and “[LCDZT] has expertise on issues of inclusive education”.⁸

With funding from DFID, LCDZT has been implementing an inclusive education programme. SCZ's collaboration has enabled work (primarily on teacher education) to be expanded to additional districts.⁹

LCDZT manages and delivers SCZ's inclusive education project. It leads on the planning and implementation – along with the DEOs and provincial schools psychological services (SPS) – of in-service training for teachers, school development committee (SDC) training, and community awareness-raising events on inclusion which target local leadership, community members and parents of children with disabilities.

The project has also supported the DEOs to adapt the infrastructure of at least five schools in five districts¹⁰ to illustrate the importance of inclusive education practices and approaches for the inclusion of children with disabilities.

⁵ For more information on the LCD structure/members see: www.leonardcheshire.org/international/global-alliance#.VYUmNUZtfYR

⁶ See www.leonardcheshire.org/who-we-are#.VYUvA0b15Bs accessed 20/06/2015.

⁷ See www.campaignforeducation.org/en/ accessed 20/06/2015.

⁸ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p48 & p. 21.

⁹ <http://www.leonardcheshire.org.zw/>

¹⁰ Chikuku in Bikita District, Runwa in Rushinga District, Marinoha in Matobo District, Mushumbi in Mbire District and Samende in Binga District

1.1.2. Disability in Zimbabwe

Key figures

This section focuses primarily on the context of disability in relation to the education sector, as that was the only sector investigated during the field work (see Section 1.3 for information on methodology and logistical constraints).

“A study supported by DFID and the United Nations Development Programme in Zimbabwe (2009/2010) confirmed that nearly 10% of the population have one form or another of disability. The 2012 EMIS report confirms that about 10% of learners in the school system have one form or another of disabilities”.¹¹

A 2013 survey by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) of nearly 15,000 households (approximately 50% with a person with a disability (case group) and 50% without a person with a disability (control group)) cites the National Survey on Disability and Health (NSDH) (2013), which states that “the prevalence of disability in Zimbabwe is estimated to be 7%”.¹² Based on a total population of approximately 13 million, this amounts to over 900,000 individuals with a disability.¹³

The same document also cited information on school attendance (people who had ever attended any school, college or university) for individuals aged three years and above. The figure given was 84.2% of people with disabilities have received some sort of formal education at some time.¹⁴ However, while it seems many attend school at some point, this figure does not necessarily mean such a high percentage complete a full education cycle.

“Zimbabwe ... has a ‘learning crisis,’” one of the characteristics being: “Children with Disabilities (CWDs) ... in most cases are either not enrolling **or dropping out** due to challenges they face to continue with their education”.¹⁵ [emphasis added]

“...vulnerable children including the children with disabilities (CWDs)... form a big part of children not in school, repeaters and dropouts”.¹⁶

“A study report by Leonard Cheshire Disability Trust of Zimbabwe (2011) estimates that there are about 250,000 learners in schools with different kinds of disabilities and challenges that threaten them dropping out of school”.¹⁷

SCN’s proposal to Norad for 2015-2018 highlights that such drop-outs are due to the lack of assistive devices, but the reasons are likely to be more diverse and complex.

¹¹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 42.

¹² Living Conditions among Persons with Disability Survey, Ministry of Health and Child Care, 2013, p. 24.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Living Conditions among Persons with Disability Survey, Ministry of Health and Child Care, 2013, p. 29.

¹⁵ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 10.

¹⁶ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 11.

¹⁷ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 12.

Overall, however, there is a lack of reliable data on children with disabilities in SCZ's target districts,¹⁸ although it is thought that most children with disabilities who are attending school learn within special classes and resource units.¹⁹

Legislative context

The new constitution was signed into law on 22 March 2013.

“[The constitution] has a specific provision on child rights and in many ways it is a step ahead in creating a conducive environment for children, as well as conforming with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC)”.²⁰

It makes no mention of disability or children with disabilities.

The Disabled Persons Act, 1992, which was reviewed in 1996, is aimed at empowering people with disabilities in employment, education, etc.

The Education Act, 1987, which was revised in 1992, has a non-discrimination clause relating to access to education, but this has not been enforced.

“The Education Act has not yet been harmonised to meet the needs [of children with disabilities] and most people are not aware of such policy” (SCZ officer)

“There is no specific legislative framework that embraces the education of children with disabilities” (LCDZT facilitator).

Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) took place on 23 September 2013.

“This was historic and is a sign of commitment by the government to empower people with disabilities with not only the policies and laws but also to be practical about it” (LCDZT facilitator)

Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) took place on 11 September 1990. However, SCZ considers the child rights situation to be “alarming”:

“...the Government of Zimbabwe has ratified several treaties on child rights but has perennially failed to report on both the UNCRC and the ACRWC [African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child] within the stipulated time frames due to lack of political

¹⁸ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 12.

¹⁹ LCDZT facilitator, pers comm.

²⁰ SCZ Country Annual Plan 2014, p. 2.

will, financial and technical capacity. In addition, the concluding observation to the UNCRC of 1996 reveals that government has weak systems to effectively implement child rights...".²¹

1.2. Methodology

This study was part of a wider review being conducted by SCN, looking at SC's work to promote the rights of children with disabilities. Three countries were selected by SCN for more detailed case study visits: Nepal, Somaliland and Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe field work followed a methodology guide developed for all three country visits (see Appendix 2). The main methods used were semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The latter were often combined with other participatory activities, such as a transect walk, whereby the facilitator walks around a school or other place with one or more stakeholders, enabling the stakeholders to talk about what they see and what they think about certain parts of the school. Photography was also used with school children, enabling them to take photos of their school as a stimulus for discussion about disability/inclusion issues.

The pupils' focus group discussions and follow-up transect walk were attended by children with and without disabilities. The parents' focus group discussions were attended by family members of children with and without disabilities.

The table in Appendix 3 summarises the methods used during the field work, and with whom.

1.3. Challenges and limitations of the review

Several significant challenges were experienced during the field work, with the potential to impact on the review findings (see below). Nevertheless, the logistics were well planned by the SCZ Education Programme Office, enabling protocol activities and core meetings with stakeholders to be accommodated. The language interpretation provision, when required, was also very efficient.

Key challenges included:

- Initial meetings with SCZ staff were cancelled at short notice to accommodate a meeting with the PS.
- The consultant was not able to interview all the representatives of other thematic areas. He was able to interview the Emergency Food and Shelter Programme

²¹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 12.

(EFSP) staff in Binga and the Rural District Council (RDC) partner on the HIV and AIDS project in Mbire. SCZ staff meetings rescheduled for the end of the visit period were not done as the consultant left earlier than planned due to a family bereavement.

- Only MoPSE agreed to the review. It was not possible for SCZ to request authorisation from other government ministries at short notice. Consequently only education projects could legally be visited, not health and social services projects.
- At short notice, the MoPSE PS assigned a member of the senior management team – the Director of Junior Education – to accompany the review group at all times. His presence as a senior officer curtailed detailed interviews or discussions with MoPSE staff at both district and school levels. This, combined with the cancelled staff meetings (mentioned above), resulted in gaps in the review findings, primarily related to SCZ operational and human resource issues. However, encouragingly, the Director of Junior Education noted that the two-week trip had helped him to understand SCZ's work and the extent to which inclusion is occurring in the rural schools. His increased awareness of activities on the ground is an unintended result.
- Approximately three of the eight field work days were spent travelling between project sites, and many protocol visits were necessary, reducing the total amount of time available for interviews/focus groups.

2. Findings

2.1. Policy situation

The reduced opportunities to interview SCZ staff meant the consultant did not elicit much information about their understanding of or opinions on SC's policy and strategy situation in relation to disability.

The available staff responses indicated an understanding that the country programme's position on disability is set out within the country's strategy document, although the consultant was not able to access/review this document. There was understanding that SC's current strategy:

“promotes the right to education for the disabled children and [therefore] SCZ seeks to do what is possible to promote the right to education for disabled children, hence work on ramps in the schools, disabled children's learning facilities, etc” (SCZ officer)

Staff reported that they access SC's Onenet for guidance on SC education strategy, and that SCZ's education work is:

“guided by MoPSE's policy on inclusive schools [that] all children have access to quality education regardless of their disability” (SCZ officer)

The LCDZT facilitator felt that SCZ has a clear commitment to support children with disabilities:

“[SCZ] thrives to provide quality learning environments for all children and these [actions] have helped us to ensure that children with disabilities are not just enrolled in school but to ensure they [also] benefit from it”.

Other stakeholders expressed their opinions about government policy issues, but (inevitably) were not aware about SC policy issues. On government policy, all adult respondents were aware of the new Constitution and the Education Act. However, they acknowledged that resources, trained staff and finance are not available to ensure implementation.

“[Legislation] recognise the needs of children with disabilities, but they need to be implemented” (acting head teacher, Chikuku Primary School)

“There are challenges to meeting the constitution's [objectives] as we don't have the knowledge to include these children” (teacher, Mahuwe Primary School)

“The constitution allows all children to get educated, the resources are not enough to cater for all children, and children with disabilities need special resources” (teachers, Samende Primary School).

2.2. Save the Children programme/project interventions

2.2.1. Inclusive education project

Project approach

Training

LCDZT has a strategic partnership with SCZ in the delivery of inclusive education training. LCDZT works closely with DEOs and School Psychological Services (SPS) at district level. Facilitators from the three agencies work together to deliver in-service training to teachers and awareness-raising events to communities. Inclusive education teacher-training workshops have been held at district level and then the training is intended to cascade to a cluster of four to seven schools. Regular class teachers from each school attended the district workshops (approximately 20 teachers attended each workshop).

The in-service training delivered to teachers by the DEO remedial tutor²² and LCDZT and SPS facilitators consisted of activities such as: identification of disabilities and behaviour, how to manage children with disabilities, and inclusive teaching skills, approaches and strategies.

The LCDZT/SCZ training manual “Inclusive Education Training in selected Districts of Zimbabwe Targeting Teachers, ECD Care Givers and Parents, SDCs” was reviewed by the consultant. The content overall is good, offering clear inclusive education messages that are in line with current international thinking and approaches. It also outlines a good selection of participatory and reflective activities, which is a positive move (too many training courses around the world still perpetuate top-down training/lecture approaches). The manual becomes a little less clear/easy to follow in the latter sections on specific disabilities.

Awareness-raising community events

The DEO remedial tutor, and the LCDZT and SPS facilitators also delivered awareness-raising workshops for parents and community members, e.g. in schools and at community growth points.²³ These participants were then expected to cascade the

²² The remedial tutor helps children with learning difficulties, such as those who have attained lower levels of literacy and numeracy than their peers.

²³ Growth Points are almost always located in a communal land (formerly Tribal Trust Lands) and are usually made up of a few shops. There is only one Growth Point per communal land. Wikipedia, accessed 15/05/15.

information they received to their villages. They trained 20 clusters of communities/villages per district.

The manual “Understanding disability: promoting inclusiveness in early childhood development: A training manual for communities” appears to be less good quality than the previously mentioned “Inclusive Education Training” manual. The “Understanding disability” manual appears to have a more medical-model disability focus (including some concerning terminology, see f.n.25) and is potentially not as well-suited to a community target audience.

Resource units

SCZ’s programme has supported a resource unit (a classroom) in three primary schools in Mbire and Bikita districts.

“Government has provision for the establishment of a special class for learners with learning difficulties and those that ‘lag behind’ where the school has an enrolment that is more than ‘400’ learners or a school that has learners who have learning difficulties that are 7 or more. Schools can apply for such a class and when granted permission, the school is provided with a special class teacher depending on availability. Schools can also be granted permission to establish resource units through the support of the district. However, not all districts have such resource units”. (SCZ officer)

Each resource unit is responsible for a different group of children with disabilities: one for children with visual impairments, one for hearing impairments and one for children with ‘mental challenges’²⁴ or who are ‘mentally retarded’ (broadly defined as children with cognitive impairments and learning difficulties). For example, in Mbire District, Mahuwe Primary School has a visual impairment resource unit; there is a hearing impairment resource unit at Mushumbi Primary School; and a ‘mental challenges’ resource unit at Mhokwe Primary School (for children with different cognitive impairments and learning difficulties). These resource units are not accessible to all children with disabilities. Many of these children remain out-of-school and others stay at the school during the week (see Section 2.3.6).

²⁴ The term ‘mental challenges’ appears throughout the inclusive education project documents, but does not appear to be clearly defined. The manual “Inclusive Education Training in selected Districts of Zimbabwe Targeting Teachers, ECD Care Givers and Parents, SDCs” lists the following as common mental challenges in Zimbabwe: Down’s syndrome, phenylketonuria, fragile, hydrocephalus and hypothyroidism. The definition provided in the manual “Understanding disability: Promoting inclusiveness in early childhood development. A training manual for communities” explains (inaccurately) that mental challenges are “Problems with issues that have to do with memory”. It further explains “The following are the terms used to describe people with mental illness: intellectual disability, cognitive disability, learning disability, learning difficulty, mental impairment, mental retarded, imbecile, moron, spastic, idiot, mentally subnormal, morally defective, educationally subnormal, uneducable, varied abilities and retarded.” (It notes that some are derogatory and should be avoided, although doesn’t say which.) The lack of distinction between mental illness and various cognitive/intellectual/developmental impairments is of particular concern.

Project results

Training

At Mahuwe Primary School, the teachers noted that they had not cascaded the learning to their colleagues in the school, but did not reflect on why. A SCZ colleague reflected that this may have been because: i) the teacher sent to the training might not be competent enough to subsequently facilitate training with colleagues; ii) the head teacher might not fully understand the concept of cascading so does not support the trained teacher to schedule time for or organise trainings for the other teachers; iii) the teacher just reports back at a staff meeting and this theory is not put into practice throughout the school.

Community awareness raising

The Mbire RDC representative observed that through the inclusive education awareness-raising events at schools and in the communities, more children with disabilities now attend school.

“Parents have increased knowledge and exposure that their children [with disabilities] can do something in life”.

In addition he noted that the follow-up home visits and the presence of disabled role models have influenced parents and further supported changes in their attitudes to educating their children with disabilities.

“Role models especially affect parents in a positive way. Parents have seen the blind teacher working in the school and their attitudes changed”.

Role models have included a blind teacher and an albino teacher now working in Mbire District schools. The project intervention facilitated the deployment of the teachers with disabilities to the project schools.

Parents spoke positively about the impact of the awareness-raising events, the new changes happening as a result of SCZ’s programme with LCDZT, and their active role in this:

“[We] learned about inclusive education, shared experiences and learned from one another” (parents, Mahuwe Primary School)

“We called similar meetings with people who had not attended the awareness-raising meetings” [and] “cascaded to villages and inclusive education was accepted”.

School Heads in Bikita District who had been previously trained on the QLE approach also noted that village heads and other “influential people” attended inclusive education workshops and then “went back to their villages and cascaded their learning to the communities”.

Resource units

Increasing numbers of parents have brought their children with disabilities to be taught in the resource units as a result of the awareness-raising meetings and inclusive education training for teachers.

“More than a thousand children with disabilities who were not in school are now in school as a result of the project and the attitudes of communities have improved a great deal as communities and SDCs are more supportive of all their children than before. Communities are also taking an active part in making their schools more inclusive by providing additional resources to the project”. (LCDZT facilitator)

SCZ staff noted that the visual impairment resource unit is assisting children with visual, hearing and mobility impairments to be included in mainstream classes – after learning to use their assistive devices. However, they observed that in schools with resource units for learners with ‘mental challenges/mental retardation’, the learners often remain in and only study in the resource unit, separated from their peers. They often only mix with non-disabled children during breaks.

Ongoing challenges exist, which were perceived as hindering greater inclusion in regular classes. For example, Mushumbi Primary School reported a lack of hearing aids for children with hearing impairments. Teachers and children (with and without hearing impairments) also do not know sign language. At Mhokwe Primary School the mainstream teachers reportedly do not have the teaching skills to include children with cognitive impairments and learning difficulties in their regular classes.

SCZ education staff commented that the resource unit initiative “has not been very effective” at helping to make more/all schools inclusive and child-friendly. The key reason was perceived to be because the specialist teachers in the resource units are only trained to work with specific disabilities, and each centre is disability-specific. Also the majority of schools do not have a specialist teacher or resource unit.

“For over ten years the Government started talking of inclusive education (the concept of a child-friendly school) but on the ground very little is going on in terms of adapting schools to be child-friendly for all children because of lack of resources and training” (SCZ officer)

Thus few resource units actually facilitate inclusion. Children with disabilities mostly remain segregated in resource units, occasionally integrating with their peers at break-times and during sports activities.

To help move the project from segregation/integration towards inclusive education, SCZ’s new four-year framework proposal for 2015-2018 proposes teacher training sessions “on creating safe learning environments, codes of conduct in the schools, child rights, child participation and child centred teaching methodologies” and the

“assessment of their needs which can hamper them from learning... and where possible, assistive devices [will] be procured to aid the learners complete the primary school cycle”.²⁵

Recommendations

The project has already taken steps in the latest plan to move more towards inclusive education (away from integration or segregation of learners with disabilities in resource units). This needs a strong ongoing focus. The role of resource units may need adapting so that they more clearly act as an inclusion resource to other classes/teachers rather than mostly directly teaching the children with disabilities.

The project may need to ensure that increasingly the resource unit teachers are trained and given the remit to work in an itinerant way, supporting and advising regular teachers in their classes. The resource teachers could work with regular teachers, parents and children without disabilities to help them learn sign language, braille, and other skills to support children with disabilities in class and around the school. The resource unit could be further developed as a place where adapted teaching and learning materials are kept, for regular teachers to borrow or copy/adapt when making their own materials. Resource units may also need to focus on helping regular teachers do more self-learning by accessing reading or audio-visual materials about inclusive education.

Cascade processes for training teachers about inclusive education and/or the inclusion of children with disabilities are increasingly recognised globally as being ineffective.²⁶ The process is usually focused on conveying and passing on theoretical messages, whereas inclusive education training needs to be based on observation, practical learning-by-doing and reflective thinking. The latter is essential for enabling teachers to reflect critically on their own attitudes and practices towards teaching and towards their pupils (or certain groups of pupils like those with disabilities).

The latest plan mentions an increasing focus on child participation and child-centred teaching methods. To achieve this, the project may need to check that its approach to teacher training involves very hands-on, reflective, action-research based learning for teachers, and not just one-off, primarily theoretical workshops.

²⁵ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 25.

²⁶ See for instance, Rieser, R (2013) Teacher Education for Children with Disabilities. Literature Review, UNICEF, p44-46 www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Teacher_education_for_children_disabilities_litreview.pdf

Resource unit staff could potentially be trained as inclusive education action research facilitators. Their role could include supporting regular teachers, parents and children to engage in a process of investigating and reflecting on inclusion challenges and solutions in their school community, and then developing plans and taking action, with support from the resource unit (and from LCDZT and SCZ where needed). SCZ has existing experience around action research, having published a manual on it in 2013.²⁷

2.2.2. Other education initiatives

During interviews and focus groups, children with disabilities were primarily mentioned in relation to the inclusive education work. The extent to which they are included, or the ways in which they are included, in other education initiatives supported/promoted by SCZ was less explicit. This may be because the limited field work did not enable all relevant project personnel and stakeholders to be consulted.

Quality Learning Environment programming

The QLE programming has been implemented in 6 schools (3 in Matobo district and 3 in Rushinga district) through SCZ's 'I'm Learning' pilot project. In the two districts the pilot project has the following objectives: (a) to improve the quality of the learning environment in target primary schools; and (b) to improve children's development and learning outcomes in foundational skills. Besides district personnel and teachers in these two districts, SCZ also raised the awareness of stakeholders in Binga and Bikita districts on QLE, child rights governance, and child protection. SCZ's 2013 annual report recorded that:

"This project resulted in improved learning environments, community participation and the immediate result was improved children's attendance at school".²⁸

QLE school head teachers interviewed in Bikita District were fully aware of barriers to inclusion for children with disabilities, although the extent to which actions had been taken to include them was less clear.

SCZ's 2015-2018 framework proposal makes extensive mention of QLE, including making more use of QLE to address the 'learning crisis' which includes addressing "challenges that threaten the participation of the girl child and children with disabilities in primary school education".²⁹ The document also indicates that "The QLE indicator will be used in project target schools to identify issues on CWDs

²⁷ SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 5.

²⁸ SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 6.

²⁹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 12.

[children with disabilities], plan interventions and monitor the situation of these children".³⁰ Available documents do not yet provide more in-depth information on the implementation of this commitment.

Improving reading

SCZ has sought to improve primary school children's reading levels in the five education impact districts.³¹ The manual for this initiative explicitly articulates strategies on how to teach reading to children with disabilities. The manual was produced by SCZ and the University of Zimbabwe, one of SCZ's strategic and technical partners. The manual has been distributed to all schools in the districts of operation, for teachers to use as resource material.

The University of Zimbabwe has been sharing reading-related best practises with all teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. Improved reading levels were verified by the national Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment (ZELA) of 2013. The project highlighted that children's learning ability is influenced by their reading ability, and thus stressed the importance of learning to read.³² The available documentation does not provide information on whether reading skills have been improved for children with disabilities. Literacy Boost initiatives included reading camps for teachers, children and community volunteers to encourage an interest in reading. Data was not available to the consultant regarding the level of participation by, or adapted approaches for, children with disabilities.

Early childhood development (ECD)

SCZ has been implementing ECD programmes in Binga District since 2003. LCDZT has provided technical advice to ensure that the ECD work has had some focus on disability. The programmes have undertaken community awareness-raising events, strengthened the capacity of SDCs, built outdoor play areas and produced indoor play materials using locally available materials.

This has "made ECD popular and all project areas registered increased enrolment. There was strong community participation and involvement in the activities. In addition, the quality of ECD education was further enhanced by the continued capacity building of para-professionals manning ECD classes".³³

'Strategic Breakthrough Investment in Education' funding enabled SCZ to work on 'Increasing Access to ECD for children with special needs in Binga district'. The

³⁰ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 42

³¹ Bikita, Binga, Matobo, Mbire and Rushinga

³² SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 6.

³³ SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 6.

consultant did not access much information about this initiative.³⁴ The project sought to increase enrolment and attendance of marginalised children, especially those with special needs, in early childhood development centres. It focused on building the capacity of Centre Management Committees and SDCs around inclusive education and child-friendly approaches, with the aim that the committees would raise awareness in their communities, leading to greater community support for/use of inclusive, child-friendly ECD centres.

Education in emergencies project, Zvishavane

The project trains school staff, pupils and SDC members in disaster risk reduction (DRR), to ensure that communities are resilient to hazards and climate change. It builds the capacity of children, SDC members and teachers to develop school-based DRR and emergency preparedness plans. It also provides and sources (e.g. in partnership with UNICEF) resources to schools to rehabilitate infrastructure damaged by rain storms.³⁵

The project facilitators reportedly ask: which children, for example orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), are least likely to benefit from school. The project manager was aware of children with disabilities within this ‘vulnerable’ group. He mentioned his awareness of various barriers experienced by children with disabilities (e.g. traditional beliefs about disability affecting how families treat their children, and transport challenges/costs for children with disabilities wishing to get to school), although did not discuss actions taken.

Recommendations

Information from SCZ, particularly written documents, do not appear to be explicitly recording or reflecting on the extent to which children with disabilities are considered across all of the organisation’s education initiatives, beyond the inclusive education work with LCDZT. This does not necessarily mean that children with disabilities are excluded from other initiatives. It would be good practice if all education initiatives were encouraged to record information on *how* they have included/supported children with disabilities. The strategic partnership with LCDZT could be expanded (if necessary) to enable LCDZT to play a ‘critical friend’ role across all education (and other sector) initiatives, to give feedback and advice on boosting inclusivity.

QLE offers an opportunity for injecting key monitoring questions about disability and inclusion into all education projects. The SCI Inclusive Education Working

³⁴ Information is primarily from: ‘Education Breakthrough Strategic funding 2012’. Quarterly update report. Jan-Mar 2012.

³⁵ SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 7.

Group is developing an adapted version of QLE which more explicitly addresses inclusion questions. SCZ may be able to use this adapted version. Or, if SCZ is already moving ahead well with using QLE to address inclusion/disability-related monitoring (as planned in the 2015-2018 Norad proposal), then they could perhaps feed into the Inclusive Education Working Groups and share their experiences.

2.2.3. Projects in other sectors

The consultant was not given permission to visit projects within other sectors (beyond education). This also meant not being able to formally interview SCZ staff working in those sectors in the field. This greatly reduced the possibility of finding out about other sectoral activities, or eliciting the disability-related views and experiences of SCZ staff in the field or of their partners working in those sectors.³⁶ The following is therefore based on brief informal discussions and information available in the documentation accessed by the consultant. However, disability/children with disabilities are not mentioned under non-education sectors in most of the available plans and reports.

Health

In the 2015-2018 Norad framework proposal, SCZ commits to reaching teenage and disabled mothers in its MNCH work. It will use community awareness raising to help reduce stigma and discrimination against pregnant teenagers and disabled women.³⁷ SCZ also seeks to create a “disability-friendly environment” within its health programming.³⁸

HIV and AIDS Project

SCZ implemented an HIV and AIDS project in Mbire District between 2010 and 2014. The project focused on the most vulnerable children in the community, and this included children with disabilities. In the community, the HIV and AIDS project worked through child protection committees (CPCs), which are still functioning today. It implemented income-generating projects – rearing goats and sheep – which are now providing a source of livelihood for families, some of whom have children with disabilities. If girls, including girls with disabilities, had been sexually abused and these incidents were reported to the police, the girls were sent to the local clinic and

³⁶ Due to the consultant having to shorten his stay he was unable to have discussions with Harare-based SCZ officers who could have helped to fill information gaps.

³⁷ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 43

³⁸ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 49

offered a post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). This project is now managed by the Ministry of Health and Child Care.

The project's focal person in the RDC explained that when he worked on the HIV and AIDS project he had observed several parents of children with disabilities being unconcerned for these children. For example, the parents "don't see these children doing anything for themselves, therefore [they] don't need to go to school" or they don't take them to school and they are left alone at home while their parents go to the fields.

Emergency Food Security Project, Binga District

"Zimbabwe is experiencing high levels of food insecurity owing to the poor harvests in 2013, erratic rains, the high cost of agricultural inputs and projected high cereal prices due to the poor maize harvest. A report on the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) released by the World Food Programme in August 2013 states that an estimated 2.2 million people will be food insecure during the pre-harvest period in early 2014".³⁹

The SCZ Binga staff members mentioned that although they do not specifically ask about children with disabilities during their household visits, they record OVCs and have noticed that some of these children are children with disabilities. They reflected during the discussion that their questionnaire could easily be amended to identify any children with disabilities in the households.

Child Protection

SCZ's Child Protection work "is strengthening coordination of multi-sectoral response to violence and sexual abuse (Victim Friendly System). LCDTZ is the partner in the system focusing on ensuring that abused children with disabilities access services within the response system. SCZ is also supporting roll-out of the national case management model which is designed to ensure that all children, including children with disabilities, access services, within which are also disability specialist partners such as the J F Kapnek Trust working to ensure access to services for children with disabilities".⁴⁰

³⁹ SCZ Country Annual Plan, 2014, p. 2.

⁴⁰ SCZ officer, pers comm.

Recommendations

Steps could be taken to ensure that household surveys and other data collection processes used in SCZ explicitly include questions relating to disability. In this way, projects from other sectors could also help identify children with disabilities in communities, with a view to referring them to inclusive schools.

Support could be requested from LCDZT to ensure that the most pertinent questions are included. It would therefore be important to see LCDZT as a strategic partner to SCZ more broadly. LCDZT (or other disability NGOs operating in Zimbabwe) could be invited to give 'critical friend' inputs into various sectoral plans, to suggest ways in which SCZ can more explicitly focus on children with disabilities using simple, achievable strategies and actions that do not require those sector staff to be disability experts.

2.3. Insights from review respondents

Due to the research limitations (explained in Section 1.3), the bulk of findings relate to the opinions and experiences of stakeholders involved in the inclusive education programme, but also of other community development projects.

2.3.1. Respondents' views on SCZ's inclusive education programme

Visits were made to three primary schools: one from each of Binga, Bikita and Mbire Districts. Stakeholders shared their thoughts and understanding of the success of the SCZ-supported inclusive education work. Discussions were held in focus group meetings with pupils, teachers, parents and SDC members, and during the pupils' transect walks in their school grounds. Interviews were also held with relevant personnel such as head teachers, DEO staff, provincial staff (such as the Provincial Education Director (PED)) and RDC staff.

Children with disabilities are present in school

Respondents stated that prior to SCZ's inclusive education project there were always a few children with mild disabilities (such as children with mobility, hearing and visual impairments and mild learning difficulties) attending school, though they were not necessarily participating and learning.

"They [children with disabilities] didn't get any assistance as teachers didn't have any knowledge, so the children were isolated and we [teachers] thought they should be learning together on their own" (Samende Primary School, acting head teacher)

Following the project's community awareness-raising events and inclusive education in-service training for primary school teachers, the number of children with disabilities attending school has dramatically increased, especially of those children with mild disabilities and/or learning difficulties. SCZ's 2013 annual report notes:

"[for] vulnerable and marginalised children, the work on inclusiveness has enabled the education program[me] to make inroads to campaign, profile SC on getting the disabled children in school".⁴¹

Many of the new attendees have never been to school but others are returnees.

"In 2010 the majority of children with disabilities were at home. [However] since the SC initiative started in 2012, children with visual impairments and children with hearing impairments are now attending school and in Grades 1 to 7 you will also see children with learning difficulties" (Mbire DEO remedial tutor and the Mashonaland Central provincial psychologist)

"Since changes have been made to the school to make the school child-friendly, some of the children with disabilities who [had previously] dropped out have returned" (Samende Primary School acting head teacher)

SCZ reported that by the end of the first year of the project,

"...there was a marked increase in the numbers of children with disabilities enrolled in the schools".⁴²

Examples of positive results

Many examples of individual children who have been able to attend and experience participation or learning/social achievements were provided during the school visits (see Appendix 4). On the whole, the respondents reported the positive results, but much less information was provided with regard to *how* these results were achieved, i.e. what concrete steps had been taken to help the children towards these achievements.

Recommendations

Inclusive education is most successful when stakeholders can learn from real-life experiences (their own, or other people's). Reflecting on and documenting experiences needs to be a key part of any inclusive education project. The SCZ project may need to increase its focus on supporting stakeholders to reflect on *what* they have done, *how* they did it, what worked or could be improved, etc,

⁴¹ SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 1.

⁴² SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 5.

(not just recording the end results). Ideally, the recorded examples of children with disabilities who have been included and who have achieved something, need to be accompanied by a story explaining the pedagogical, environment, attitudinal, policy or resource decisions/changes that were made in order to bring about this inclusion/achievement.

2.3.2. Respondents' views on attitudes towards children with disabilities in school

Negative attitudes

A range of respondents mentioned negative attitudes towards children with disabilities. Parents and pupils at Chikuku Primary School in Bikita district, for instance, reported that when children with disabilities started to attend school, other children “crowded around them”, some children laughed at or fought with them or made derogatory remarks. This has not necessarily completely changed yet, despite the inclusive education project.

“We use the toilets with those that see and they blame us when it is messed up” and that “some [pupils] refuse to work with us because we don't see” (children with visual impairments, Mahuwe Primary School)

The acting head teacher of Samende Primary School and the Mbire DEO remedial tutor highlighted the negative attitudes among teachers towards children with disabilities, both when the children started to enrol, and now. After one year of the project, LCDZT reported that “negative attitudes are still prevalent not just among teachers but also the parents of children”.⁴³ The following year, LCDZT continued to report negative attitudes as being “a major obstacle to the implementation of the inclusive education programme”.⁴⁴

Gender discrimination was also raised by the LCDZT facilitator:

“Girls with disabilities face even more challenging situations due societal attitudes” and “are less likely to be in school than boys with disabilities” ... “attitudes on disability affect people the same way regardless of their socio-economic status or age due to deeply entrenched stereotypes on disability”.⁴⁵

Positive attitudes

SCZ's interventions are seeking to reduce the negative attitudes towards children with disabilities by promoting their right to education. Following the awareness-

⁴³ LCDZT Annual Report 2012, p. 4.

⁴⁴ LCDZT Annual Report 2013, p. 3.

⁴⁵ LCDZT facilitator, pers comm.

raising events and inclusive education training for teachers, respondents felt that they have observed more positive attitudes emerging. Children with and without disabilities reportedly share ideas, play together and help one another. The Chikuku Primary School SDC members gave the example of a recently enrolled boy who uses a wheelchair. He has made friends with children who push him to and from school and around the buildings.

“Now children are playing together, doing things together; there is no more isolation, there is acceptance” (Samende Primary School SDC focus group)

“[Children’s] attitudes have changed” (Chikuku Primary School parents)

“There is good socialisation of children with disabilities with other children, for example, during gardening the regular children will help the children with disabilities, they share food and other resources, they play with them” (Mahuwe Primary School parents)

Teachers’ and parents’ attitudes have also started to become more positive and supportive.

“The inclusive education training gave us knowledge and skills. Before 2012 there was lots of absenteeism [of children with disabilities] but since we have been trained they have developed interest in coming to school and teachers and children show them more consideration” and “teachers are treating them equally, assigning them the same duties. They feel highly respected” (Samende Primary School teachers)

“[Teachers felt] their levels of knowledge and skills had greatly improved and their attitudes were no longer the same” (LCDZT facilitator in 2014)⁴⁶

“Before, they were not treated well, as other pupils looked down on them and they were absent. But, when we [teachers] acquired knowledge through the equality and child rights training, all the pupils are now at the same level” (Samende Primary School teachers)

“Parents are increasingly taking a more enabling role as more and more children with disabilities are being enrolled into school following the widespread training and community sensitizations” (LCDZT facilitator in 2013)⁴⁷

Success at school

Respondents reported that children with disabilities are participating and learning. They are often achieving higher marks than their non-disabled peers, which in turn is changing parents’ and peers’ attitudes:

“[Parents] feel that their children [with disabilities] are like any other children and they are now in Grades 3, 4 and 5” (Mahuwe Primary School teachers)

⁴⁶ LCDZT Annual Report 2014, p. 4.

⁴⁷ LCDZT Annual Report 2013, ps. 3, 4.

“Children with disabilities were taken to the special [resource] centre, taught some concepts, went into the classes and now read and write” (Samende Primary School parents)

“Some children with disabilities are excelling, especially at sport and art”, and “[one girl] is good across the whole curriculum” (Samende Primary School teachers)

“The performance of some children with disabilities is matching or even surpassing [other] children. Some children with disabilities are born gifted even though they have a disability” (Mahuwe Primary School parents)

Children with and without disabilities in the three schools visited observed that learning together has led children without disabilities to be more friendly, accepting and understanding.

“We speak to them and give them good news at break-time”.

Some pupils stated that they helped their friends/brothers/sisters, for example, by looking after their books.

“If I see something wrong I report it. I stop them [bullies] and take them to the teacher” and “I tell them it is wrong”.

A friend of a child with a speech impairment stated that “I chat with him and I am patient with him”.

Pupils were aware that “there is a special class for children with disabilities with a special class teacher” and that this teacher tries to help these pupils’ learning needs.

Pupils also noted changes in adults’ attitudes towards children with disabilities:

“Parents create their own sign language with their children”.

“Some teachers wash their [children with disabilities’] clothes”.

“Some parents give them [other people’s children with disabilities] clothes”.

Recommendations

Efforts have been made to change attitudes, and this had been having noticeable results, although negative attitudes still exist. SCZ may need to reflect on the content and style of training and awareness-raising activities so far, to see if more effective approaches could be used. For instance, sessions that encourage reflection, empathy and an understanding of how/why discrimination exists in society are usually more effective than traditional trainings which may tell participants what to do or what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’.

Similarly, people may be more convinced by a new argument if the person leading the discussion has a disability him/herself. For teachers in particular,

trainings that are very practical and based on problem-solving can help to overcome negative attitudes, by removing the fear associated with facing an unknown new situation.

2.3.3. Respondents' views on further help needed in school to support inclusion of learners with disabilities

Respondents observed that schools and communities have begun to make progress towards including children with disabilities in school. However, they accept that many such children are still not regularly attending school, participating fully in classroom and whole-school activities, or achieving to their full potential.

Respondents offered the following reasons:

Assistive devices

Respondents felt that the lack of assistive devices (e.g. walking sticks, wheelchairs, hearing aids, and spectacles) was hampering attendance and progress at school. Samende Primary School teachers also stated that where hearing aids exist, many no longer function because the batteries have run out, and parents cannot afford to replace them. The SCZ framework proposal 2015-2018 seeks to provide assistive devices by “network[ing] with service providers”.⁴⁸

Teaching and learning resources

The Mashonaland Central PED argued that “schools need assistive devices and learning and teaching resources to ensure that all children can access the curriculum”. Other interviewees mentioned the need for:

- large-print books: Mahuwe Primary School teachers suggested “colourful textbooks and gadgets – musical and speaking”.
- games and sports equipment: Mahuwe Primary School parents suggested technical support people need to train teachers and children with disabilities to play games/sports.
- additional life skills equipment: Chikuku Primary School SDC members mentioned the need for sewing and knitting machines, cooking utensils, drawing and art materials, which could then be used by all pupils.

The Binga Inclusive Education Baseline Report (2012) discovered “gross inadequate teaching and learning resources to cater for children with special needs”.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 42.

⁴⁹ SCZ Binga Inclusive Education Baseline Report, 2012.

Respondents also suggested that teachers, parents and children need sign language training to enable children with hearing impairments to learn and communicate. Some also suggested having additional helpers, such as teaching assistants, in class. Parents from Chikuku Primary School mentioned that exposure to role models, e.g. teachers, politicians, etc, with disabilities, could change the attitudes of children and adults.

Income-generating projects

Several respondents mentioned that many families live in poverty, unable to afford school levies, school uniforms, transport costs, food, etc. Some suggested that more income-generating projects should be initiated in the communities, to help families find the money needed to send their children with disabilities to school.

School infrastructure

The inclusive education project has made some changes to the schools' infrastructure and surrounding environments, to make them more accessible and child-friendly.



Accessible and level assembly point at Samende Primary School, Binga, Binga District
(photo taken by school children during the review activities)

Respondents noted that more needs to be done. The Binga Inclusive Education Baseline Report (2012) also acknowledged that “challenges to inclusive education included inaccessible school infrastructure”.⁵⁰ Classes are often overcrowded. For example, at Samende Primary School more classrooms are needed because seven classes are learning under trees.

⁵⁰ SCZ Binga Inclusive Education Baseline Report, 2012.

“The facilities are not so user-friendly, there are few ramps to accommodate children in wheelchairs and [most] toilets are not disability-friendly” [only two new accessible toilets have been constructed] (Samende Primary School parents)

“Most schools are not child-friendly” (Mashonaland Central PED)

SCZ’s framework proposal for 2015-2018 states that it will be working towards “making schools accessible for [children with physical impairments] through minor infrastructural improvements”.⁵¹

The Mahuwe Primary School SDC and the Chikuku Primary School parents both mentioned that their children should have appropriate (and accessible/adapted) furniture to facilitate group-work and other inclusive teaching and learning practices.

Recommendations

Many changes that stakeholders would like to see to make their schools more inclusive involve financial/material costs. SCZ may need to develop plans for action which involve:

- Developing more links with disability-specific organisations and service providers, who can advise, fund or provide materials
- Innovative problem-solving approaches among stakeholders, so that challenges can increasingly be addressed without the need for disability experts or extra/costly materials. The action research approach suggested above (which could be facilitated by staff from resource units) could help with building momentum and confidence for innovative problem-solving.

2.3.4. Respondents’ views on teaching

“At first the teachers faced challenges with inclusive education but now the teachers are adapting to it” (Mahuwe Primary School parents)

Following the inclusive education training, regular teachers reported that they had greater confidence to include and teach children with disabilities, but also acknowledged remaining skill gaps and highlighted the lack of teaching and learning resources to ensure all children can fully access the curriculum.

Chikuku Primary School teachers hoped that with additional inclusive education training they can help children with disabilities to transition fully from the resource unit into mainstream classes. However, teachers continue to struggle with teaching children with learning difficulties. Chikuku’s SDC gave as an example a girl who

⁵¹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 42.

dropped out of the resource unit because she wanted to transfer to the mainstream classes with her friends. The mainstream teachers felt they did not have the teaching skills to include her.

Teachers' "fear of failure" was highlighted by the Binga DEO remedial tutor. This fear makes them unwilling to include children with disabilities in their classes. He also noted the high staff turnover, especially among temporary untrained teachers. Incoming teachers have not received any inclusive education training, and therefore follow-up training is needed. In addition, many of the new satellite schools (57 new primary schools attached to existing ones registered in Binga) have temporary untrained teachers, who find "including children with disabilities a big task".

The lack of trained personnel was raised by the Mbire DEO officer:

"Of late we have received a few trained teachers, but most schools are staffed by temporary teachers [unqualified teachers with five 'O' levels but no teaching qualifications]. Some of these have left and been replaced with temporary teachers who have degrees but still no teacher training. Staff lack inclusive education skills so they need staff development".

He mentioned that some teachers have received additional SEN training – specialising in a certain area of SEN – but he doubts whether the new teachers have received any inclusive education training.

The SCZ framework proposal for 2015-2018 acknowledges the need for teachers to receive additional inclusive education training and states that the project will take a district-wide approach to trainings.⁵²

Samende Primary School teachers acknowledged that their inclusive education skills needed "upgrading". For example, they had attended a one-day sign language training, provided by SCZ, which they felt to be insufficient. They suggested that they could do more training during school holidays. Chikuku Primary School parents also voiced concerns that their teachers needed more training.

The level of teachers' skills is clearly an issue that needs ongoing attention.

"[Teachers] cannot handle children with severe disabilities, but can teach mild SEN and disability" ... "there is room for improvement of practical pre-service training of inclusive education knowledge and understanding" (Mashonaland Central PED)

⁵² SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 42.

Recommendations

Teacher education, for inclusion (and for other issues), often needs to be re-thought. The traditional approach of providing in-service training workshops is one option that NGOs and donors favour because it is relatively easy and cost effective to deliver. However, it only delivers a partial and often unsustainable solution (as the SCZ project has experienced). One-off workshops rarely provide teachers with the depth of learning needed to be inclusive. Such workshops also rarely offer the hands-on practical learning that will help them overcome fear of unknown problems, like teaching children with diverse (dis)abilities), and help them develop reflective and creative ways of working.

SCZ may want to consider ways to evolve their support for teacher training (both pre-service and in-service training) by focusing more on:

- *Advocating for/supporting inclusive education to be embedded throughout teacher training:* working with pre-service and in-service training institutions, SCZ could support the revision of existing inclusive education training materials/courses. It could also support the development of an inclusive education training module for pre-service trainee teachers and experienced teachers. SCZ could further advocate for inclusive education and messages about the importance of inclusion/non-discrimination to be embedded throughout all pre-service teacher training.
- *Ongoing learning:* e.g. through regular informal experience sharing sessions such as during staff meetings; or sharing simple reading materials regularly, even a small inclusion newsletter to which schools contribute articles about their problems and ideas. This can help to fill the gaps and keep teachers motivated in between more formal trainings.
- *Reflective learning:* e.g. through small, school-based action research projects that help teachers to investigate barriers to inclusion, reflect on good practices and develop and test new ideas, in a participatory way with parents, children, disabled community members, etc. This can help to make teachers more independent problem-solvers who can find inclusive solutions even without being told them in a training.

All of the above can help with sustainability, by embedding inclusive education into a teacher's understanding of their role from day one. It also helps to create a culture of learning and sharing in the school, enabling inclusive ideas and experiences to be passed more effectively to incoming teachers.

Through its involvement in such learning processes with teachers, SCZ could learn and reflect, which would be useful for both improving the way it

documents inclusion/disability/education work and for ensuring that future project planning is based more on critical thinking and reflection.

2.3.5. Respondents' views on community issues

Children with and without disabilities from all three schools mentioned that they and their disabled peers face lots of challenges, within their families and local communities (and that similar challenges are experienced by all children living in poverty).

“Some do not have clothes to wear or food to eat”.

“Some come to school hungry”.

Some “are overworked at home”. Pupils reported seeing children with disabilities being “sent to do heavy jobs like carrying water and collecting firewood”, or “[scaring] birds from the fields instead of going to school”.

“Some are beaten at home”.

“Some are scolded and sent into the forest for three days”.

“Sometimes they are left on their own when their parents go away or go to the fields”.

Negative attitudes in the community

Several respondents noted that prior to the community awareness-raising events children with disabilities had been treated badly by their families and local community members.

“[Children with disabilities] were despised, not mixing with other children, looked down on and isolated in the community. They didn't go to school”... “[People though children with disabilities] couldn't do activities done by other children” (Samende Primary School parents)

“At home the children [with disabilities] are sometimes treated as useless and parents are ashamed of them” (Mahuwe Primary School teachers)

“Some parents don't like their children because of their disabilities” (Mahuwe Primary School pupils)

“Before [the awareness-raising] people felt children with disabilities are useless people, that they should be thrown into the Zambezi, that they are expensive, and wishing they would die. Now beliefs have changed because of the training”. For example, “parents are more accepting and feel that it is natural to get a disabled child” (Samende Primary School parents)

“[Before SCZ started the inclusive education awareness-raising] I would say that there was neglect, like the Hindu untouchables. Children with disabilities were kept at home... They were considered worthless people by society... [Communities] laughed at

them, they didn't allow their children to play with children with disabilities and the parents of children with disabilities would hide them away... Husbands would divorce wives if they had a child with a disability..." (Binga DEO director)

These sorts of negative attitudes reportedly still continue to some extent, even after the SCZ activities. The Mashonaland Central PED noted that many families continue to hide their children with disabilities at home, especially those with severe disabilities. The Mbire RDC representative also highlighted that parents feel children with disabilities won't do anything so don't need to go to school, and parents often abuse children emotionally or neglect them. Samende Primary School's acting head teacher said the fear of witchcraft and threats to kill those with disabilities drives families to hide their children.

"[People believe that] if a pregnant woman meets a person with albinism this will be transferred to the unborn child". Binga DEO remedial tutor

The issue of parents over-protecting children with disabilities also persists:

"[Parents] do everything for them instead of asking them to do jobs, which would ensure that they are visible in the community, play there and do things with their peers and thus become accepted and empowered." (Samende Primary School teachers)

Positive change in attitudes

The awareness-raising activities have nevertheless brought about some changes in community attitudes, as illustrated by these stakeholder comments:

"[Now] people appreciate these children with disabilities are just like other children and can do activities that [other] children can do" (Samende Primary School parents)

"There are quite a number of children with disabilities in the community and people are accepting them" (Mahuwe Primary School parents)

"In the community as well [children with disabilities] are playing with friends, before they were hidden" (Chikuku Primary School SDC members)

"Since the inception of the programme there appears to be a more positive picture in issues relating to children with disabilities at all levels of the community" (LCDZT facilitator, 2013).⁵³

"There has been a tremendous positive change [in attitudes], there is no longer any discrimination; parents now come forward and are saying that their children need assistance" (Binga DEO officer)

"Communities are quite positive, they have learned to accept children with disabilities going to school; it has been a gradual change" (Chikuku Primary School teachers)

⁵³ LCDZT Annual Report 2013, ps. 3, 4.

Respondents also highlighted the need for further, ongoing community awareness-raising events, to reinforce messages among parents who have not yet understood or accepted the ideas about disability rights/inclusion, or to reach communities that have not yet been reached.

“Some parents may not have accepted the situation and need to be revisited with further awareness-raising” (Mbire DEO officer)

“[We need] trained people in inclusion in the communities so that they will raise awareness”... “[training] shouldn’t only be in the schools” (Chikuku Primary School parents)

“Communities need more sensitisation, especially since communities are becoming more inclusive but after-school life needs to be attended to as well” (Samende Primary School SDC members)

The system for ensuring that everyone in the community accesses information and advocacy messages relating to disability may not have worked as effectively as it could. The Binga DEO remedial tutor noted that not much training took place in the communities with village heads, community members and parents because “sometimes cascading hasn’t happened”.

2.3.6. Respondents’ views on out-of-school children

Through the community awareness-raising events many children with disabilities now attend school. Others remain out-of-school, “especially those with multiple disabilities” (Mbire DEO remedial tutor).

Respondents such as Mahuwe Primary School teachers and the acting head teacher of Samende Primary School felt that other support groups, such as faith-based groups and business groups, could help to trace out-of-school children.

Mahuwe Primary School teachers suggested that parents of out-of-school children with disabilities could be encouraged to enrol their children by watching what other (enrolled) children with disabilities are able to do or achieve. Poverty, and thus the need for income generating projects to support families of children with disabilities with school costs, was also raised by some respondents.

Issues such as gender inequality and child marriage feature in the 2015-2018 SCZ plans, focusing on “keeping [girls] in school for their protection and development”.⁵⁴ This is important because the UNICEF and MoHCC survey (2013) showed that fewer girls than boys with disability attended school, college or university.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 42.

⁵⁵ Living Conditions among Persons with Disability Survey, Ministry of Health and Child Care, 2013, p. 29.

Travel to and from school

Transportation was cited as a key reason for children with disabilities remaining out of school.

“Even with a wheelchair the ground is too uneven” (Samende Primary School parents).

“Schools are too far away from homesteads and parents can’t carry them to school and back every day: there is poverty and parents do not have money for transport” (Mahuwe Primary School parents)

Children offered various comments:

“They need to be carried to school and there is no transport”.

“It’s difficult for them to walk to school”.

“There are so many [children with disabilities] out there that there are not enough wheelchairs so they stay at home”

Teachers thought that it would be a good idea to give/lend bicycles to children with mobility impairments. These children are often late to school, and having their own transportation would help them be more punctual.

Boarding facilities

A challenge for families following the success of SCZ’s awareness-raising activities has been the numbers of children with disabilities who live too far away from their local school. Schools have tried to mitigate against the lack of daily (accessible) transport by providing boarding facilities during the week. As a result, several primary schools are using/renting empty rooms or houses near the schools in which children with disabilities can board during the week. However, the facilities may not be suitable or clean, and/or there may be insufficient food or care for the children.

“The makeshift accommodation ... is inadequate” (Mahuwe Primary School teachers)

Presently, the lack of accommodation for children with disabilities who cannot travel every day to school is limiting the numbers of children who can attend school.

Transitioning to secondary school

Many children with disabilities who attend and succeed at primary school drop out when transitioning to secondary school. Respondents noted that secondary school teachers have not received any inclusive education training. The UNICEF and MoHCC study (2013) noted that “more individuals with disability report completed primary

education as their highest level ... This indicates a disadvantage for individuals with disability in the transition to secondary school and to O-levels”.⁵⁶

Respondents mentioned various individual cases of children who did or did not manage to transition successfully to secondary school. For example, Samende Primary School SDC members stated that two of their children with visual impairments had recently transitioned to Fatima Secondary School. The school has a number of children with disabilities and has a resource unit to assist their inclusion. In Chikuku Primary School, a boy with a mobility impairment was enrolled in the school following the awareness-raising campaign and he has recently graduated and is now attending a local secondary school. However, the DEO of Binga District observed that a girl with a hearing impairment, who was assisted in primary school by a signer,⁵⁷ transitioned to secondary school “but she has now dropped out because there are no secondary school teachers able to include her”.

“The conducive environment here [primary school], embracing children with disabilities, needs to be duplicated in the secondary schools” (Mahuwe Primary School teachers)

2.3.7. Respondents views on access to other services/agencies

The consultant was not able to visit projects or formally interview field personnel working in other sectors. Education respondents were asked about inclusion in other sectors, however. Some felt that children with disabilities do not face discrimination when *accessing* other government agencies such as clinics, hospitals, and social services, but the services are often unable to help them.

“All [children] have access to services, no one pays to go to clinic or hospital” (Bikita District QLE head teachers)

“[Children with disabilities] are referred from clinics to specialists in hospitals. Unfortunately there are often no medicines at the hospitals” (Samende Primary School teacher)

“A child with epilepsy can’t find pills but also parents don’t have funds for transport to get to Binga clinic” (Samende Primary School parents)

“At times children with disabilities require the attention of social services. For example, their parents are very poor and cannot support them with even food, but the social services often do not have funding available” (Mahuwe Primary School SDC members)

2.3.8. Respondents’ views on screening, identification and assessment

The Provinces’ SPS psychologists have worked alongside the DEO staff and the LCDZT facilitator during the SCZ-supported community awareness-raising events. They have

⁵⁶ Living Conditions among Persons with Disability Survey, Ministry of Health and Child Care, 2013, ps. 31-32.

⁵⁷ A person who communicates or interprets via sign language.

also undertaken follow-up screening (which takes 15 to 30 minutes), identification and assessment of children with disabilities (e.g. hearing, visual and learning disabilities) in schools and in the communities. They make referrals to major hospitals if they are not able to identify the child's specific impairment themselves.⁵⁸ They often do this with the DEO remedial tutor. Unfortunately, the SPS undertake very few follow-up visits due to a lack of funding. Thus, many children with disabilities are screened, identified and then enter the school system, but often their needs are not assessed nor are they given appropriate support.

In Binga District, the DEO remedial tutor and an SPS psychologist have visited communities to screen, identify and assess children with disabilities and to encourage parents to take them to school. Some children have mobility impairments and they were provided with wheelchairs to use to go to school. One child entered Grade 7 (the end of primary school) and has "gone right through to Form 4 [in secondary school] now that he has a wheelchair. He has got good attendance and punctuality, and his sociability has improved; his friends push him to and from school". Eleven children with albinism were identified and went to Bulawayo, where they saw a specialist to be assessed for sunglasses and were also given sunscreen lotions. Children with hearing impairments were also identified and sent for assessment, but unfortunately there were no hearing aids available for those needing them.

In Bikita District, the DEO remedial tutor stated that he identifies children with disabilities in schools and communities and then writes to the SPS to ask for them to come and assess these children's needs. Masvingo Province has four psychologists but unfortunately without funding they are rarely able to travel to the rural areas. Occasionally there has been some limited finance available from SCZ or BSPZ (Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe). The SPS was described as "overwhelmed" and "if [children with disabilities] do manage to get assessed often the SPS do not have funds to supply the required assistive devices".

In Mbire District, the DEO remedial tutor stated that he does a lot of awareness-raising and screening in the rural areas, but "it all depends on the availability of funds". The identified children with disabilities should be assessed by one of Matabeleland North Province's eight SPS psychologists. Lack of funding means they visit the districts rarely (e.g. the last time the psychologist visited Mbire District was in September 2014, when 40 new children with disabilities were identified and assessed with SCZ support).

⁵⁸ LCDZT facilitator, pers comm.

2.3.9. Respondents' views on SCZ's support to activities in the community

Respondents in all three districts remembered a number of activities which SCZ has supported over the years. Many did not initially identify the inclusive education programme as one which SCZ has supported (SCZ funded it) since it was led by LCDZT, the DEOs and the SPSs.

In schools, respondents said that SCZ has assisted with:

- providing educational resources such as Braille machines, library books and text books
- providing ECD teaching resources and outdoor equipment and built ECD outdoor play areas
- creating HIV and AIDS clubs and dramas
- building ramps, disability-friendly toilets with seats, handrails and wider entrances, level and even pathways, level and even assembly areas (see photograph in Section 2.3.3.)
- building teachers' houses.



Accessible toilet (far right) at Chikuku Primary School, Chikuku, Bikita District

In the communities, respondents said SCZ has assisted with:

- dam wall construction
- renovating boreholes, donating elephant pumps
- building latrines
- building dip-tanks
- income-generation projects such as the livestock exchange programme and donating goats to families
- giving food aid, targeted at poorest families
- helping poorer families, such as paying children's school levies and providing school uniforms

- assistive devices such as hearing aids, spectacles, walking sticks, wheelchairs and “bicycles for children with walking difficulties” (Mahuwe Primary School teachers).

SCZ was remembered as having facilitated workshops on:

- action research
- creating conducive teaching and learning environments
- child-friendly schools
- child protection
- child rights governance
- inclusive education
- inclusive ECD
- DRR
- fighting teenage pregnancy
- reading programmes
- children’s voices/children’s involvement in decision-making
- QLE.

One Bikita District QLE head teacher summed up the SCZ workshops they had previously attended by stating: “the new QLE project is summative of all SCZ’s previous workshops”. Chikuku Primary School SDC members noted that SCZ had funded a delegate exchange visit to Mhangura in 2013 to observe how two schools had worked to become more inclusive.

2.4. Project cycle and monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

As noted in Section 1.3, the consultant’s curtailed field research opportunities reduced the amount of time the consultant was able to spend with SCZ staff discussing ‘internal’ issues such as project management systems and M&E processes. The findings therefore focus more on M&E in relation to the inclusive education programme than in relation to SCZ’s systems overall.

SCZ staff noted that their education projects, such as on ECD and inclusive education, monitor and evaluate disability in their reports. The consultant was able to access various progress reports from the LCDZT/SCZ collaborative work. A SCZ officer also stated that disability “is one of the top priorities during baselines”.

The Binga DEO remedial tutor stated that the ECD project has undertaken a small baseline study (2012) following 48 families of ECD-involved children with disabilities

over four years.⁵⁹ Presently, over 100 children with disabilities have been identified, of whom 15 are albino children.⁶⁰

The Binga ECD project's categories of disability are:

- Hearing
- Visual
- Physical disability
- Mentally [challenged]
- Deaf
- Epilepsy
- Speech disability.

The inclusive education programme documentation refers to only four main categories of disability:

- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Physical disability
- Mentally challenged.

The LCDZT facilitator noted that during the inclusive education planning stage the baseline survey did seek to identify children with disabilities.

“[The survey] determined the attitudes of people and their willingness to accept the programme as well to get an overall feeling of the numbers of children with disabilities in school and those out of school and to find out why these children with disabilities are out of schools as well as finding out how the communities feel the problems can be addressed” (LCDZT facilitator).

He also noted that the project

“[monitors] retention in school, daily attendance through registers, progression to the next grade, numbers of children with disabilities enrolled as well as their pass mark through written texts in schools, the numbers of community members reached, teachers trained and their level of uptake of inclusive education methodologies, and number of schools adapted. [These] are all indicators used to measure progress in the programme”.⁶¹

The Mbire DEO remedial tutor and the Mashonaland Central Province SPS psychologist argued that although the clustering training and awareness-raising was

⁵⁹ SCZ Binga Inclusive Education Baseline Report, 2012.

⁶⁰ “A total of 179 households with at least one member with albinism were identified giving an estimated prevalence of 0.03%. This amounts to 3 900 individuals based on the 2012 population census results”. Living Conditions among Persons with Disability Survey, Ministry of Health and Child Care, 2013, p. 25.

⁶¹ LCE facilitator, pers comm.

delivered, the cascading in schools (by the trained selected teachers) and communities (by the trained selected community members), needs monitoring.

“The district office should be able to check so they [teachers/community members who have been trained] don’t lie” [about cascading in their schools/communities]”.

Unfortunately no funding is available for the DEO to undertake a follow-up visit and check whether cascade training has occurred.

SCZ staff noted that the organisation’s non-disability-specific programmes do not include a focus on disability in their M&E. They were aware of children with disabilities during surveys undertaken within non-education thematic projects (projects not directly aimed at children with disabilities), but were not recording these children as a separate group. For example, they were recording children with disabilities under the group of “OVCs”.

However, an SCZ officer stated:

“In the new approach currently being put in place all thematic areas are integrated [which] will ensure that all activities have the component of inclusion of children with disability”.⁶²

Recommendations

In future, SCZ may need to take steps to ensure that when any project is collecting information about potential beneficiaries or children participating in the project, they collect information about children with disabilities. Data would ideally be disaggregated by disability and (where possible/relevant) by types of disability, with steps taken to clarify definitions of different impairments.

All SCZ’s thematic projects could take steps to explicitly plan for the inclusion of children with disabilities. Projects could ensure that children with disabilities are involved in and have access to project events and activities, and ensure that their views are collected and recorded during M&E processes.

SCZ may also need to do some work on how it defines groups of children. For instance, currently a wide range of children with different impairments and needs are grouped under the term ‘mental challenges’. The term currently seems to encompass everything from mental illness to cognitive impairments, learning difficulties and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. SCZ or stakeholders are not necessarily clearly understanding who these children are and what their needs are. Such a broad ‘catch all’ category is not in line with international norms. Collecting and analysing disability data across SCZ’s projects

⁶² SCZ officer, pers comm.

would also be easier if all projects used similar terminology and groupings for children.

More investment may be needed into ongoing monitoring, for instance to follow-up training activities to see if/how the intended cascade process is working, or to find out what needs to be done to improve the process (or to replace it with a different process for sharing learning and experiences).

2.5. Participation, consultation and collaboration

2.5.1. Consultation at the level of project design/development

Respondents provided a mixed picture of the extent to which SCZ has consulted stakeholders in relation to the design, development or running of the education projects.

The Bikita District QLE head teachers mentioned that in 2014 pupils' reading was assessed and their standards were identified as poor. The schools suggested to SCZ that their teachers needed training and this resulted in SCZ implementing a reading programme. They also stated that SCZ interviewed teachers before the child rights, inclusive education and QLE training programmes were designed and delivered.

Samende Primary School teachers stated that SCZ had not consulted them until this review meeting. The parents added that although they were not directly consulted by SCZ, their SDC had sought advice from them and other community members, for example, "last year when they were improving the walkways". The SDC members were more frank stating: "they [SCZ] come and ask what we think, but they have already decided [what they want to do]".

Chikuku Primary School teachers noted that at SCZ meetings the teachers gave ideas for inclusion, such as building ramps and making other infrastructural changes. The teachers helped with the work, such as moulding bricks, and they bought sand and paid half of the builders' costs.

A SCZ officer acknowledged that children with disabilities are not consulted at key project cycle stages but that this "is in the pipeline".⁶³ For example, the new SCZ framework proposal for 2015-2018 details to some extent future consultation of children in the health programme: "beneficiary groups will be engaged in the

⁶³ SCZ officer, pers comm.

consultative, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation”. Consultation of children with disabilities is not mentioned in future education work.⁶⁴

2.5.2. Children’s voice/participation

Overall the situation of child participation/voice in Zimbabwe is not good:

“Zimbabwe has no clear policy which promotes the participation of children in decision making processes such as budgeting and peace building. Consequently, child participation is upon the ‘benevolence’ of the policy and decision makers whose decisions on child participation are compromised by an entrenched notion within communities of ‘seeing’ and not ‘hearing’ the child; ultimately, children’s voices are hardly heard especially in remote and hard to reach communities”.⁶⁵

The LCDZT facilitator concurred that within DPOs and NGOs children’s participation “is at a very low scale as the adults plan for the children in most cases, the belief being [among adults] that children are incapable of making decisions”

However, SCZ has made progress in relation to promoting children’s participation/voice. For instance, SCZ stated that within its CRG work:

“Awareness creation among children and communities on child rights and child participation has resulted in the appreciation of the value of involvement of children in decision making processes at local and national level. The Government has shown this commitment through undertaking a consultative process with children from various child led groups, while collecting information that fed into the State party report to the ACRWC [African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child]”.⁶⁶

SCZ has also provided technical and financial support to children, including Child Led Groups, to enable them to engage with the local authorities on issues affecting them in their communities, such as the issue of birth registration, disability and allocation of resources to children’s initiatives.

“[Following the adoption of the new Constitution and elections in 2013] “the existence of vibrant child led groups (Save the children supported), Junior Parliamentarians and Senior Councillors provides space and structures through which the programme can escalate child participation and children’s voices in decision making processes”.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 43.

⁶⁵ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 13.

⁶⁶ SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 5.

⁶⁷ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 16.

Nevertheless, entrenched attitudes remain and SCZ wants to get more community leaders and opinion makers involved in promoting child participation.⁶⁸ Further, SCZ's latest plans seek to ensure that:

“...the voices of girls and children living with disabilities are not swept under. In addition to this, the [Child Rights Governance] programme will collaborate and support campaigns and initiatives to promote inclusion and meaningful participation of children living with disabilities and the girl child in decision making processes at national and local levels”.⁶⁹

2.5.3. School-level consultations with children

Chikuku Primary School SDC members mentioned that they had consulted the pupils before the recent building work. Children with disabilities had suggested the new pathways with bridges over the flood channels that carry rainwater away from the school grounds. The parents stated that their children, including children with disabilities, were involved in the construction work, for example, painting the pillars holding up the roofs outside the classroom. They also helped to carry water and bricks [the consultant witnessed this at the end of the day when he visited].

At Samende Primary School, the teachers and SDC members stated that the SDC speaks to the children, including children with disabilities. The school has a junior SDC committee whose members (children with and without disabilities) discuss issues with their peers. The junior SDC then meets with the SDC and discusses issues raised by the pupils. This information is then related to SCZ when its staff visit the school. The pupils have expressed their concerns about school levies being too high, the lack of text books and uniforms, and the need for a secondary school block, which is now being built behind the existing primary school.

During the Bikita District QLE head teachers' focus group discussion, the interviewees were asked if children were consulted. They stated that both children and parents were recently asked for suggestions about ways to use the school improvement grant. The pupils were asked what they needed, and children with disabilities were included in the decision-making process. Their participation included:

- pupils discussed and agreed their own school code of conduct
- pupils chose their own monitors and prefects
- pupils chose their sports kit colours
- pupils allocated which classrooms each Grade would learn in to ensure that Grades 6 and 7 didn't always learn in the old blocks – they rotated the classrooms between Grades.

⁶⁸ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 17.

⁶⁹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 43

2.5.4. Collaboration with other organisations

The review was mostly able to document the collaborations between SCZ and LCDZT and MoPSE in relation to the inclusive education programme. Meetings with a wider range of organisations were not possible. The LCDZT facilitator noted that:

“A number of DPOs and NGOs are actively involved at various implementation levels to reach out to influence policy makers, government officials to embrace disability and development in all their programmes. Others are directly involved in the empowerment of people with disabilities through support with education as well as targeting adults with livelihood programmes. But there is still need for more involvement so as to provide tailor made sustainable interventions”.

LCDZT and SCZ are part of an Inclusive Development Forum. This is co-ordinated under the auspices of the University of Zimbabwe, but “needs strengthening”. The LCDZT facilitator argued that the forum was very useful and effective as an “advocacy platform” and also explained that:

“We have conducted national forums targeting strategic partners such as INGOs, NGOs and DPOs with a view to build a combined advocacy strategy [around disability issues] and it is certainly adding on to the much needed voice”.

The forum members include teachers colleges, universities, NGOs and DPOs and offers what the LCDZT facilitator called a “rich learning environment for information sharing on disability issues”. It has already shown itself to be a platform for engaging policy-makers (e.g. engaging with a senator from Parliament who represents the interests of people with disabilities).

SCZ’s relationship with MoPSE is good. In the 2013 annual report, SCZ stated that:

“[MoPSE] is appreciative of the [QLE] tool to have a holistic understanding of the school, community, children and learning dynamics”.

However, during the review, some issues were raised regarding the SCZ/ministry relationship. SCZ should liaise and meet with the Disciplinary Services Department in MoPSE, who report back to the PS. However, the new PS argued that MoPSE headquarters did not know about SCZ’s work in the provinces.

“It would be better if we [MoPSE] know at this level [headquarters] what is going on [so that SCZ] focuses on areas we are coming from” (MoPSE PS).

She noted that MoPSE recently undertook a curriculum review but had not engaged with SCZ on it “because SCZ is working at the provincial level”. The PS also explained that SCZ had been absent from a recent MoPSE retreat at which participants

discussed MoPSE's new strategic plan. She expressed a wish for SCZ, other NGOs and MoPSE to plan more collaboratively to avoid fragmented initiatives and improve impact.

Recommendations

The new framework proposal for 2015-2018 is explicit that the voices of children with disabilities should be heard and included in decision-making. To achieve this, SCZ may need to develop/find easy-to-use guidance for its staff/partners on how to facilitate children with disabilities to participate. This would cover: how to seek out and encourage children with disabilities to engage in consultation or advocacy process; how to make events accessible; how to support communication needs for children with sensory or learning disabilities; what types of participation are needed for the different purposes the children with disabilities are engaging with the consultation process.

SCZ could again work in partnership with LCDZT (and/or other disability NGOs or DPOs) to train/advise staff on including children with disabilities in consultation or advocacy processes. Such work could be mutually beneficial: SCZ staff could learn more about supporting people with disabilities to have a voice, and the disability organisation staff could learn more about child rights and child participation/voice (as many DPOs remain adult oriented).

2.6. Staff knowledge/skills and awareness

SCZ's reputation for good work around children with disabilities seems strong:

"[[SCZ] is recognised as the leading organisation in advocating the rights of children with disabilities not just by the MoPSE but also by other NGOs, in the country and other neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, South Africa, etc, where LCD runs [inclusive education] programmes" (LCDZT facilitator)

The extent to which SCZ staff possess knowledge or skills on disability is not so clear. According to one SCZ respondent, three SCZ staff members have teacher education backgrounds "that introduced them to the basics of inclusive education". However, the organisation's SEN specialist recently left and so SCZ does not currently have anyone with that particular skill set.

"...[other] current staff have basic knowledge and understanding of disability as it relates to programming and promoting the rights of all children" (SCZ officer)

SCZ and LCDZT have conducted inclusive education training for universities, teachers' colleges, MoPSE personnel at national level, and other international NGOs such as World Vision and Plan international.⁷⁰ However, only SCZ staff working in the education thematic area have participated in disability awareness raising sessions:

“The rest [of the staff] are still to be trained”...“More needs to be done for staff to effectively integrate inclusion into CRG, Child Protection, Health and even DRR” (SCZ officer)

There is also a need for more learning within the inclusive education programme, and a need for SCZ to share what it has learned:

“[my colleagues need to] share lessons with other countries conducting similar programmes, conducting baseline surveys and creating case studies” (LCDZT facilitator).

Recommendations

Respondents during the field visits often raised the subject of the need for on-going awareness-raising and advocacy. They felt that SCZ has made a good start towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in families, communities and schools, but negative attitudes and stereotyping remain.

At organisational level, it is accepted that only a few (principally education project) SCZ staff have received some training about disability and the inclusion of children with disabilities into the community.

In order to ensure that there is more on-going awareness raising there is a need for disability awareness to be part of other thematic activities too, beyond education. Stakeholders involved in education activities are likely to be touched by SCZ's other sectoral work (e.g. health). If other sectors are also conveying basic messages about disability rights and equality then the accumulative impact on stakeholders' understanding and attitudes will be greater. All SCZ staff members ideally need to participate in some core disability awareness sessions, and if possible receive more in-depth training to help them turn positive attitudes into practical changes on the ground.

To facilitate greater disability 'buy-in' within other sectors, and enable sectors to share with each other their experiences of supporting/including with children with disabilities, SCZ could ask each thematic area to identify a disability focal point (someone who has an existing interest/skill or willingness to learn). These focal points could meet regularly as a group. Their role would be to exchange

⁷⁰ LCDZT facilitator, pers comm.

experiences from work on their sector and to undertake other learning tasks around disability, and advocate with their sectoral colleagues for children with disabilities to be considered/included.

It could be useful for SCZ to develop a clear, yet simple/achievable strategy for including children with disabilities, and ensure this is accompanied by a clear plan for staff/partner capacity building and for monitoring the strategy.

2.7. Advocacy work

Within its proposed framework for 2015-2018, SCZ aims to improve the “primary school education cycle completion rate and transition to secondary for all children, including children affected by disability and other vulnerable children” (expected result 3.1).⁷¹ The proposal argues that advocacy is important to achieve this expected result and outlines the following activities: advocacy meetings with local communities and SDCs to encourage parents to enroll their children in school; and meetings and campaigns with local leaders (village heads, councilors, religious leaders).

The proposal also indicates joint activities with the CRG thematic area to engage with national and local government and Education Parliamentary Portfolio Committee regarding issues relating to the allocation of resources for the education sector, paying particular attention to vulnerable children.⁷²

In addition, SCZ is supporting the disability advocacy efforts of LCDZT, such as:

- awareness-raising on disability, targeting government officials, such as Education for All activities in 2013 and the recent national GCE week with MoPSE and partners
- community awareness and sensitisations targeting traditional community leaders and general communities and parents of children with disabilities and children with and without disabilities,
- information dissemination on disability through the media, e.g. newspapers, radio and television for wider coverage
- national stakeholders’ workshops on disability.

The LCDZT facilitator listed their current main disability advocacy messages as:

- ‘creating equal opportunities for children and youth with disabilities’

⁷¹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 26.

⁷² SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 26.

- ‘disability is not inability’
- ‘enabling children with disabilities to access education’
- ‘open the world for a child with a disability’
- ‘access to justice for children and women with disabilities’.

SCZ and LCDZT are also involved in advocating on disability issues through their involvement in the Inclusive Development Forum (see Section 2.5.4). At a local level, schools have also conducted advocacy. For example, the Chikuku Primary School acting head teacher, who is also the resource unit specialist, noted that since 2007 he had raised the issue of inclusion at parents’ meetings, SDC meetings and general school meetings. Jairos Jiri (a national NGO working with people with disabilities) rather than SCZ/LCDZT had called the initial meeting, and has continued raising parent and community awareness after that.

Recommendations

The ongoing negative attitudes towards children with disabilities, mentioned by respondents, points to the need for continued disability-specific advocacy efforts. SCZ could ensure that messages about disability rights/equality are embedded within non-disability specific advocacy activities, across all thematic areas of work, not just in relation to education.

As a children’s rights organisation, with an increasing commitment to child participation and voice, SCZ could aim to take a stronger lead in encouraging/supporting disability advocates like LCDZT to increase the opportunities for children with disabilities to have an active voice in disability campaigns in Zimbabwe.

2.8. Other cross-cutting issues

Gender

The 2014 SCZ Country Annual Plan identifies gender as a planned objective in its Child Protection theme: “To mainstream child protection, participation, gender and diversity and accountability in all SC programming and programmes”.⁷³ The document also shows budgets for cross-thematic and non-thematic theme areas but

⁷³ SCZ Country Annual Plan, 2014, p. 4.

does not specifically identify disability or gender.⁷⁴ However, the Country Office notes that its definition of diversity includes disability.⁷⁵

SCZ's 2015-2018 framework proposal acknowledges "challenges that threaten the participation of the girl child and children with disabilities in primary school education".⁷⁶ It notes that "trainings will be held to boost the confidence of learners, especially the girl child. Supporting the girl child with 'dignity' kits and trainings for girls and parents on making reusable kits to avoid dropping out of school due to menstruation will also be another key activity".⁷⁷ It continues, saying that the Education programme will specifically target girls, children with disabilities and other marginalised children,⁷⁸ and states that it "will target MoHCC staff, pregnant women and their spouses and community at large, while mainstreaming gender and disability in its child rights programming".⁷⁹ The intersection between gender and disability (e.g. the situations faced by disabled girls) do not seem to be explicitly addressed.

Resilience

The SCZ Country Annual Report 2013 describes how the work of "the livelihoods intervention, Productive Assets Creation (PAC), in Hwange and Binga districts contributed to building community resilience and coping strategies. Various community assets such as dams, dips tanks among others were rehabilitated resulting in restoration of assets for improved livelihoods from irrigation and improved livestock production".⁸⁰

SCZ's new 2015-2018 framework proposal notes that DRR "activities will be mainstreamed in all thematic areas' interventions to build resilience of beneficiary communities and institutions. This work will strengthen the work to protect communities from the effects of disasters. Disaster management training and planning will foster risk reduction and resilience education across all thematic areas".⁸¹

Disability does not appear to be explicitly mentioned in relation to resilience-oriented programming.

⁷⁴ SCZ Country Annual Plan, 2014, p. 16.

⁷⁵ SCZ officer, pers comm.

⁷⁶ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 12.

⁷⁷ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 26.

⁷⁸ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 42.

⁷⁹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal, 2015-2018, p. 46.

⁸⁰ SCZ Country Annual Report, 2013, p. 3.

⁸¹ SCZ SCN NORAD Framework proposal 2015-2018, p. 17.

3. Conclusion and recommendations

The review visit to Zimbabwe gathered a wealth of information, although various challenges mean some key data gaps also exist. Within the inclusive education work – the sector the consultant was most able to investigate – some good quality work has been happening with reportedly encouraging results (e.g. increased enrolment of children with disabilities; improved teacher, parent and community attitudes). Challenges remain, such as how to reach more teachers with training (if cascade methods are not proving effective); how to improve teachers’ practical skills; how to enable more children with disabilities to move out of segregated resource units and into supportive inclusive regular classrooms. These are all common challenges that are not unique to SC or to Zimbabwe.

While the review was not an evaluation, the findings point to some recommendations that may be useful for the SCZ team. They are summarised below (for detailed recommendations and the evidence that supports them, see the Findings section):

Summary of recommendations

Capacity building, learning and sharing

- SCZ could ensure that all staff from all sectors participate in some disability awareness training. Each sector could also have a disability focal point who does more in-depth learning and experience sharing, as well as motivating their sectoral colleagues to consider disability equality issues.
- SCZ could develop an increased focus on supporting staff and stakeholders to reflect on and document *how* inclusion is achieved within its projects.
- SCZ (with help from LCDZT) may need to develop/provide more practical guidance for all staff/partners on how to facilitate children with disabilities to participate or have a voice.

Planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- SCZ may benefit from writing a simple, clear strategy for including children with disabilities across all sectoral work, which can be a basis for a staff/partner capacity-building plan.
- SCZ ideally needs to increase the extent to which other sector projects explicitly document their plans for and achievements relating to children with disabilities.

- SCZ could increasingly ensure that surveys/data collection relating to projects in sectors beyond education ask disability-related questions.
- To assist with monitoring and evaluation (M&E), all projects could be encouraged to collect information about potential or actual beneficiaries, disaggregated by disability. To make this easier, SCZ may need to clarify its definitions, especially the term 'mentally challenged'.
- Advocacy messages around disability rights/equality ideally need to be embedded across all sectors and in non-disability specific projects.

Inclusive education

- SCZ could increasingly focus on adapting the resource units' remit to be more outreach oriented, providing more itinerant support to regular teachers.
- To keep improving teacher training for inclusion there could be more focus on advocating for fundamental reform to all pre-service training, and more support for teachers with ongoing informal learning and reflective learning.
- SCZ could increasingly focus on developing/promoting *practical* inclusive education training for teachers. Resource unit staff could become action research facilitators, helping teachers to learn about and take practical action to address inclusion challenges.
- To address resource challenges SCZ could develop more links with disability-specific organisations and service providers, who can advise, fund or provide materials. SCZ could also focus on supporting innovative, low/no-cost problem-solving approaches among stakeholders.